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Salt Lake City draws four mayoral hopefuls as candidate deadline expires

BY CHRISTOPHER SMART

AND LEE DAVIDSON

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In what looks to be a rough-and-tumble election season, the Salt Lake City Council is in for a makeover and Mayor Ralph Becker is being challenged by four candidates.

As of 5 p.m. Monday — the deadline for candidate declarations — Becker, Councilman Luke Garrott, former state legislator Jackie Biskupski, community activist George Chapman and businessman Dave Robinson had all filed for the mayor's race. Robinson, who filed Monday, said he's running to better protect open space and watersheds and to continue to strengthen ties between City Hall and the LGBT community.

Becker is seeking a rare third term as the city's top administrator.

Ted Wilson was the last Salt Lake City mayor to be elected to three terms, although he left in 1985 before completion of his last four-year stint.

Ogden is the only other major Utah city to host a mayoral election this year and in that municipality, one-term incumbent Mike Caldwell is being challenged by Sebastian Benitez.

All 244 cities and towns have elections this year — mostly for council seats.



Francisco Kjolseth | Tribune file photo
Monday was the deadline for candidates to file for municipal offices throughout Utah.

The two top vote-getters in multiple-candidate contests will emerge from the Aug. 11 primary to grab a slot on the Nov. 3 ballot.

This year, Salt Lake City Council seats in Districts 2, 4 and 6 are up for election.

District 2 Councilman Kyle LaMalfa, who has represented the west side neighborhoods of Glendale and Poplar Grove for the past four years, is not seeking re-election. Garrott, the District 4 council member, is giving up his seat to run for mayor. At a minimum, two new faces will join the seven-member council in January.

Van Turner, who previously served three terms as District 2 councilman is again seeking the post.

He will be challenged for the west-side seat by Andrew Johnston. There will be no primary in District 2.

In District 4, five hopefuls have registered to take Garrott's place: Nate Salazar, Derek Kitchen, Babs De Lay, Miles Petty and Jennifer "Jen" Colby.

District 4 stretches from Pioneer Park to the University of Utah and encompasses downtown, as well. It is often the center of important city issues, such as crime, transportation, and economic development.

Only two of the candidates will survive the Aug. 11 runoff.

In District 6, incumbent Charlie Luke has represented Yalecrest and surrounding area since January 2012. He is being challenged by Tracey Harty, who unsuccessfully sought the post in 2011. There will be no primary in District 6.

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Other cities • In Midvale, Sophia Hawes-Tingey is seeking to become the first openly transgender Utahn to serve in public office in Utah. In Council District 2, she is facing incumbent Paul C. Glover, Leesa Myers and Nathan F. Coombs.

In West Valley City, former Democratic state Rep. Larry Wiley is challenging incumbent City Council member Tom Huynh, who was the first minority member elected to that body. Also in that race is Joe Garcia, who unsuccessfully ran for an at-large seat on the council two years ago.

Several candidates are unopposed in Salt Lake County cities — and should face easy re-election unless write-in challengers appear.

Among those unopposed: West Valley City Council candidates Don Christensen and Karen Lang; Murray City Council incumbent Jim Brass; Holladay City Council incumbent Lynn Pace; Riverton City Council incumbent Sheldon Stewart; Midvale City Council incumbent Paul Hunt; and Alta Town Council incumbents Elise Morgan and Harris Sondak.

South Jordan City Council races are attracting a crowd. Four or five candidates filed for each of three seats there, after the council had been involved in the past year in tough fights over whether and how to save the city-owned Mulligans Golf and Games.

And in neighboring West Jordan, which has seen nasty infighting, one council race has attracted multiple candidates, including incumbent Chris McConnehey. Two-term incumbent Councilman Ben Southworth did not file for re-election.

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